



ONE YEAR LATER

December 3, 2013

On November 20th precisely a year had passed since that day when certain events happened in my life, which echoed deep pain, not only for me and my family, but also for the whole church and all the churches of our association. Things we had to and have to get through now are difficult to describe in words. But at the same time I have realized that nothing accidental happens, and sooner or later, everything finds its explanation. Now I understand why a year ago Ulf Ekman tried to displace me from my ministry.

First of all, with respect and love in Christ, I want to thank Ulf Ekman, Carl – Gustav and all Swedish brothers for all the good they have done for me and our church, preaching the Gospel and bringing the message of faith. Whatever happens, I have always loved and will love them with love of Christ.

However, with pastoral responsibility for the people entrusted to me by God, it is my right and duty to explain what is happening, analyzing and reasoning on the basis of God's Word.

Prehistory

Church "Word of Life" was born at the beginning of May 1990 in Donetsk by God through me, not by Swedish brothers. For those who is trying to rewrite our history, I want to remind that everything started with a group of young people in the amount of 8 people who went out to preach the gospel to the streets of our city, and then began to gather in a private house, and from the fall of 1990 in DK "Energozavod" (Palace of Culture "Powerplant"). Later we got to know Swedish ministers, who after joining religious freedom began to visit the former Soviet Union countries, and maintained friendships and partnerships with them, as well as with many other foreign ministers.

During all these years the church has grown to 3,000 parishioners, and based by me Ukrainian association of churches numbered 200 churches throughout Ukraine. And only in 1997 by my written request and my own initiative Ulf Ekman became my pastor. In 2012, to my great regret, I was reluctant to withdraw my written request in written form.

"Different gospel"

*"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a **different gospel**— which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel **other than the one we preached to you**, let them be under*

God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel **other than what you accepted**, let them be under God's curse!" (Gal. 1:6- 9).

A year ago, a number of pastors of churches, as well as a part of parishioners of a local church, explained their leaving from the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church by the pretence, that unlike me they decided to follow Ulf Ekman and his vision. Today, most people already have new questions: what vision are they following now?

I think reading the article up to the end, you'll just as I begin to understand the reasons why they tried to displace me from ministry, and also causes of a negative reaction on my "objectionable" questions, which I previously tried to ask my former pastor Ulf Ekman.

Whence grow "spiritual roots"

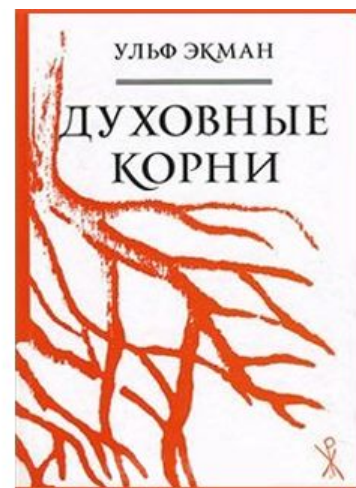


1995 г.

Being guided by specific facts, I have all reasons to believe that Ulf Ekman has radically changed his views on Biblical teachings, which he preached before.

It is evidenced by one of his last books "Spiritual Roots" and his publication in the social networks.

I want to make you acquaint with some excerpts from this book, but even on this basis, you can clearly see how the Ulf Ekman's current vision contradicts not only to his original "doctrine" but also the Scripture.



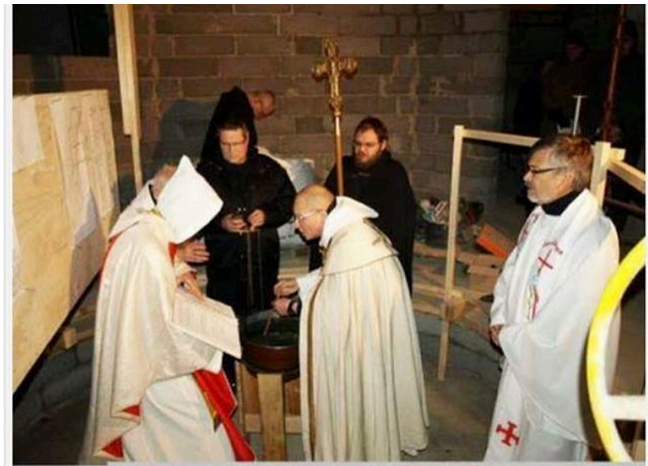
2009 г.

Change of views



«Lack of objectivity.. made me rethink the theology and practice of our church and think about our extremes, simplifications and theological ignorance. This analysis led me to the assessment of the relationship of our association to other groups and purification from observed among us superficiality ignorance and prejudice.»

By these words Ulf Ekman confirms himself rethinking of his earlier views. The things he lived for earlier and taught others, now become the “extremes”, “simplifications”, “theological ignorance”, “superficial” and “prejudice”. According to some Scandinavian journalists’ statements, the change of Ulf Ekman’s views for Europe is no longer news. But for believers of the post-Soviet space it is quite strange to learn that many blessings – salvation, healing, freedom in Christ, which have come into their lives because of the word of faith, preached by Swedish evangelists and teachers, now have become extremes and prejudices.



Ulf Ekman dressed up like a Templar Knight, worshipping together with Roman Catholic monks in Sweden.

Attitude toward evangelical churches

“God, who made the universe so beautiful, has nothing against beauty in our services. Our Protestant suspicion to all external things produced the simplistic, boring and ugly churches”.

At the same time, Ulf Ekman does not take into account the fact that unlike the Catholic and Orthodox churches, buildings of evangelical churches are not built with the support of the state, but on the offerings of parishioners, and instead of buying the golden domes and painted icons, money is spent on preaching of the Gospel. Biblical attitude towards icons Ulf Ekman apparently perceives as “Protestant suspicion” that produces “simplistic, boring and ugly churches”.

The Mission of the Holy Spirit

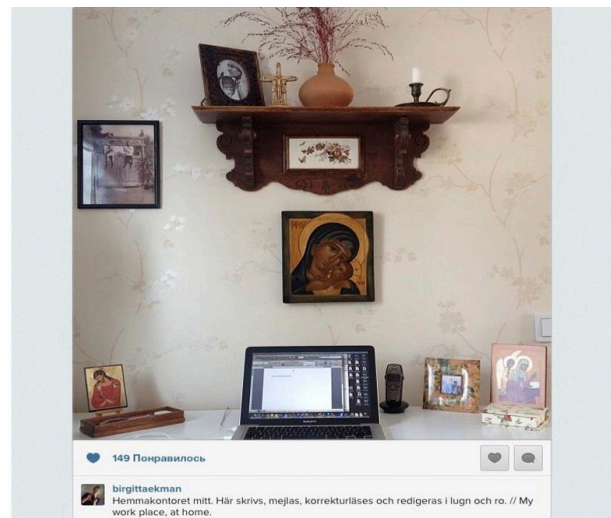
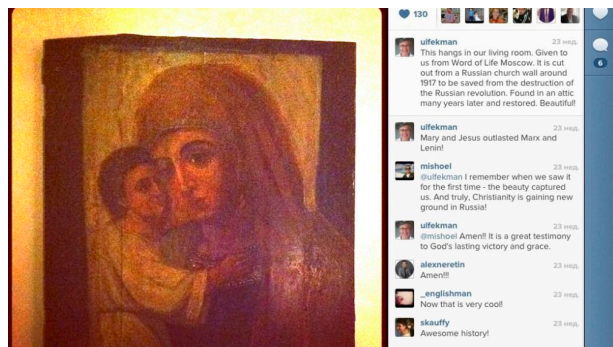
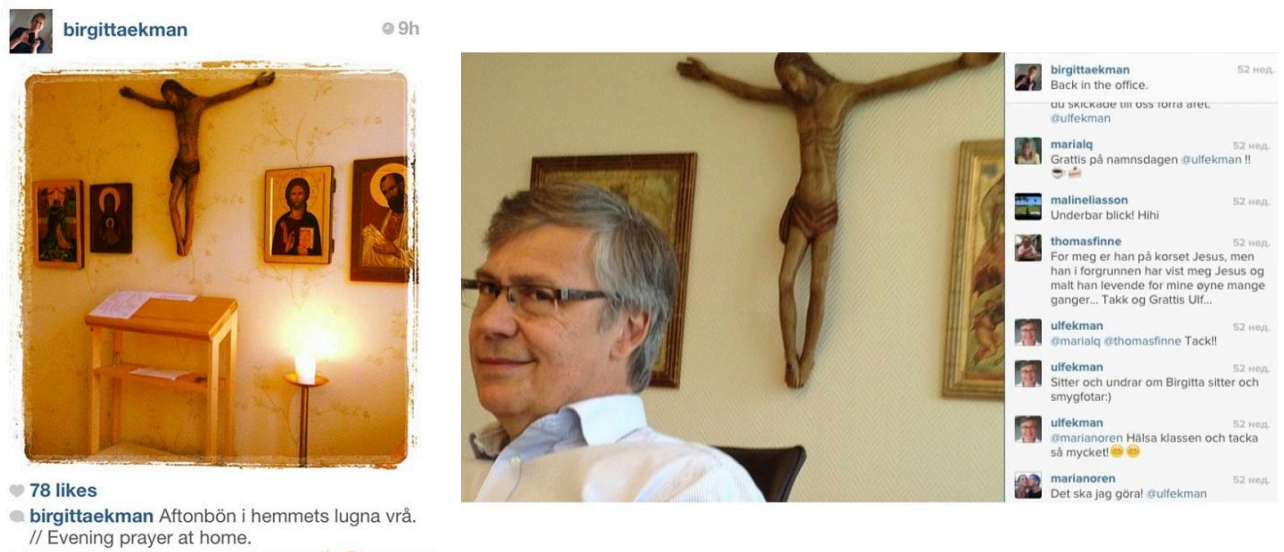
“The Holy Spirit, in contrary to popular belief of modern charismatic Christians, is engaged in storage and transmission of traditions.” With ignorant, negative attitude to the concept of “tradition” we must end”.

First of all, in my opinion, here the idea is traced that Ulf Ekman no longer considers himself as a modern charismatic Christians. Further comes the assertion that the mission of the Holy Spirit on earth, it turns out, is no longer the admonition of Christians on all the truth, but the storage and transmission of traditions. In this case one can only guess how Ulf Ekman plans to do away with the ignorant and negative attitudes towards tradition.

“Traditions, in the broadest sense of the word, are important. They are not that other, as a process in which all the fullness of human life is transmitted from generation to generation. This process is indispensable and has deep spiritual roots”.

Recollecting the early preachings of Pastor Ulf about how it was indispensable to keep the Word of God, Bible truths and movement of the Holy Spirit, you realize that the things against which Ulf

Ekman have preached for years (“tradition” and ” dead religion”), now become a certain value for him.



Insufficiency of Scripture

“Thinking about how we read the Bible, we encounter the pitfalls of the principle “Scripture Only”.

As it turned out now, the “Scripture Only” for the foundation of Ulf Ekman’s faith is not enough. According to his opinion the Bible should be read in conjunction with the traditions, the writings of the saints and other theologians, we should listen to them and put their opinion along with the Scripture. However, as a minister of the gospel, I believe that Scripture is sufficient in itself, and does not need confirmation from other sources. The principle of “Scripture Only” – is not a vice, but a blessing. Otherwise, all boundaries between truth and error are diluted.

Attitude to the Reformation

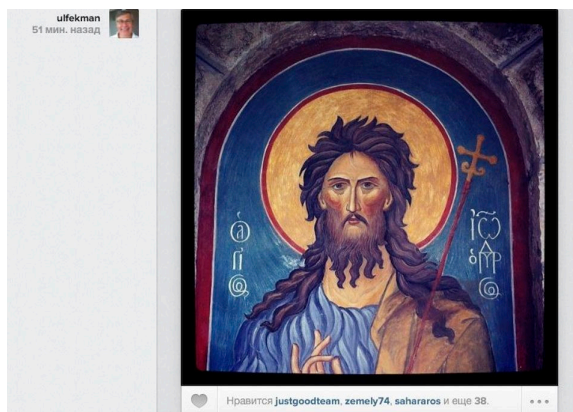
Ulf Ekman also speaks different of the Reformation, through which God once shook the world of the Middle Ages, the Crusades, the indulgences and inquisitions. Ignoring the fact that Europe was changed due to the Reformation, now he teaches the exact opposite:

“The Reformation to some extent transferred functions of the educational institution, which is the history, to the conscience of every individual, what led to many problems. The fact that thousands of people who believe in the immutability of the Bible, however, come to such different views, perhaps more than anything else contributed to the division in the Body of Christ.

“Since the Reformation in Christianity appeared deep separating gap which affects us much more than we think or dare to think. We don’t dare to rethink and analyze the side effects of the Reformation, which dramatically changed the Church and put emphasis on the Word, righteousness, faith and conscience. We also do not always recognize that secularization, denial and relativism which now prevail in the society and torment Christianity, in fact roots in legalized Reformation split. Evangelical Protestantism today continues to bear the imprint of a split, which has not been overcome”.

“What we do not always realize today – is the risk of underestimating the role of the historic church, which grew in the womb of the Scripture”.

It is obvious that Ulf Ekman not only condemns the Reformation, calling it “legalized split”, but emphasizes that “historic church”, which is referred here – is Catholic and a “split” and “separation” means the period of Reformation, when believers were separated from the Catholic Church and got an opportunity to read the Bible on their own, translated into the languages they understand. It is this “split”, according to Ulf Ekman’s opinion, is needed to be overcome.



Attitude to Mary

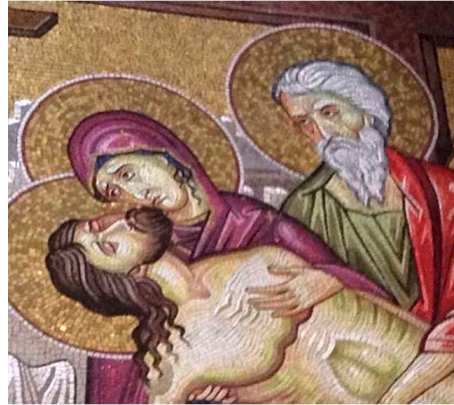
“Often in the heat of the controversy they say that the New Testament says so little about Mary. By this they want to express that Catholics, in general, have made mountains out of molehills. In fact it is not so .. but even during a cursory reading of Scripture it is evident that it is written about Mary not few times, but a lot of times. Just our reluctance to associate with her leads to an underestimation of everything that relates to her. However, her key role in the Gospels is obvious”.

“Because of theological parochialism the uniqueness of Virgin Mary as the Mother of God has disappeared from our sight”.

Contrary to his early teachings and Scripture, Ulf Ekman claims that Mary – is a Mother of God and gave birth to God (as Catholics believe), but not Jesus (as evangelical Christians believe), and she is required special reverence. Evangelical Christians believe that through Mary, Jesus came to this earth as the Son of Man, being the Eternal God, who created heaven and earth.



Ulf Ekman has an idol of Mary in his garden.



birgittaekman
Din djupa smärta. Maria, vändes på den tredje dagen till jubel. Han lever!

anna_andersen
I can't imagine what she must have felt...!

ulfekman
Det var svärdet som skulle gå igenom hennes hjärta som Simeon i templet profeterade om.



60 Понравилось

birgittaekman
Summer flowers for Jesus and his Mother. Icon from Russia.



Robert Ekh offers to believers of the church “Word of Life” in Uppsala to buy the statuettes of Virgin Mary

“All generations should treat this little Israeli girl with reverence for what the Lord had done to her . Our Protestant generation does nothing in this direction. We do not offer her that reverence with which Jesus treated her. We have not honored her also for being the mother of the Lord, who gave us

Him, the only One who saved us by grace and gave us eternal life. By contemptuous and disrespectful displacing of Mary, we have lost something important. She deserves much more than scattered attention we compulsorily pay her, hastily reading scriptures during Christmastime”.

Jesus always treated Mary with reverence, as befits the children relate to their parents. But at the same time, nowhere in Scripture we see that He worshiped his mother and admired her. When once during the sermon Mary came to him with his brothers, Jesus did not come to her, but said: “Who is my mother and who are my brothers? Those who do the will of my Father in heaven” (Mat.12:50). Mary herself said: “Do whatever He tells you” (John 2:5), and in the Acts of the Apostles we read that she was among the praying believers, on which the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:14). They did not pray to her, but she prayed.

I am also surprised and saddened by Ulf Ekman’s relation to evangelical Christians as “blinkered ignoramuses”, who “scornfully and disrespectfully” pushed Mary out. Whence have such statements appeared?..

Keys from the Kingdom of Heaven

“Peter was restored in the status of a shepherd. Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven were granted to him earlier (Math.16:19) and with a help of these keys he opened the door for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit”.

According to the Scripture, the Holy Spirit came because Jesus entreated the Father, and He sent the Holy Spirit. Peter was just one of a hundred and twenty students who were in the upper room, and he was just like everybody there filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But why the emphasis is made on Peter? Next thing, which is written – is the apostolic succession, the canonization of the church leadership that points directly to the bias in Catholicism.

Apostolic Succession

“At all times, the Spirit leads to a deeper and clearer understanding and application of what was once and forever given to us. Thus, there remains the original and the succession, and the guarantee of spiritual maturity and growth. Here we can see a part of what we call the apostolic succession”.



«In all churches eventually has emerged the belief that their primates – the bishops – accepted the right doctrine and were ordained by the apostles and their successors”.

“He who ignores the succession has incomplete or incorrect understanding of the true nature of the Church”.

As you know, the Catholic Church believes that the Pope – is the Vicar of Peter, only he has the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and

everyone who is called to bear apostolic ministry, may become apostle only after ordination by the Pope. For evangelical Christians it is heresy and has nothing to do with the Scripture. Let us recollect the Apostle Paul. Whether Peter laid hands on him? No. Then, according to this doctrine, Paul is not apostle? But Paul wrote of himself as follows: *“Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead” (Gal. 1:1).*

Unity

«On one of the old icons Peter and Paul are hugging each other. A copy of this icon is hanging in my office. This icon miraculously expresses the love and fellowship of two such different apostles”.

Typically, painters were not witnesses and contemporaries of Biblical events, and moral qualities of some of them remain in doubt. How could they depict and convey the love of God and the fellowship between Peter and Paul? I ‘m already not speaking about the use of icons by Ulf Ekman in his church office and at home.



“We cannot survive in the division and isolation. We cannot survive in an atmosphere of rejection of each other. Despite the fundamentally important differences which were among the early Christians (e.g. in the case of Paul and Peter), they had an amazing vivid awareness of belonging to one church, to a single Body. Spirit of power – is also the Spirit of unity!”

At first glance, this call to unity sounds quite spiritual. But what kind of separation and isolation is it spoken about? – About the split as a result of the Reformation. Ulf Ekman calls not for biblical, evangelical unity, but to unite the churches in the bosom of Catholic Church.

Sometimes people ask me, “Pastor Leonid, are you doing the same thing as Ulf Ekman does?” My answer: absolutely the opposite. The things we are doing in the framework of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and religious organizations are – participate in joint projects in defense of religious freedom, moral principles. We unite against the promotion of homosexuality, gay marriage, abortion, etc. But all this has nothing to do with our doctrinal differences, our teaching.

It is important to understand that we accept Catholics and Orthodox as they are. I love them, and with great respect I treat my brothers Catholics and Orthodox Christians. They do a lot for the Kingdom of God and for the good cause of people. I cherish those friendship relations with ministers of Orthodox, Catholic and other churches and religions. But when dealing with them I do not change my point of view and do not lose my evangelic identity and belonging. Just as they do not become Protestants, having been, for example, guests at our church.

Vatican II

As for the view of Catholics themselves on unity, it is available in details from the citations "Documents of Vatican II":

"However, the brothers separated from us – whether alone, whether in their communities or churches – do not have that unity which Jesus Christ was pleased to give everyone whom He revived and invigorated into a single Body and in a new life, and exactly about this unity the Holy Scripture and the venerable Church Tradition testify. For only through the Catholic Church of Christ, which represents the universal instrument of salvation, you can get full plenitude of salvation. We believe that only to the Apostles Cathedral, which is headed by Peter, the Lord entrusted all the riches of the New Testament to establish on earth the one Body of Christ, in whom must fully engage all those who in some way already belongs to the people of God.

...

Following this way, gradually overcoming obstacles which prevent perfect churchly communion, all Christians will gather in a single celebration of the Eucharist, in the unity of the one and single Church, which from the beginning was given by Christ to His Church, and which, we believe, inherently resides in the Catholic Church and, we hope, will every day grow up to the end of the century".

History of the Pentecostal Movement

"Catholics themselves argue that [charismatic] revival originated in one prayer movement that existed before the beginning of the XX century. Nun named Elena Guerra earnestly begged the Pope of those time Leo XIII ... about the renovation of the sermon on the Holy Spirit and prayer for His new outpouring. On the night of January 1, 1901 the Pope on behalf of the whole church, called the Holy Spirit in prayer, "Oh, Spirit creator, come! ", beforehand giving the order to all bishops to pray for a new outpouring of the Spirit in the new century. On the same day the Holy Spirit descended on the small Bible school students – Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas – and in the night from 1900 to 1901, they spoke in tongues. The school was founded by preacher Charles Parham".

All of us have heard about the world famous Revival on Azusa Street, when the Holy Spirit descended on the Bible school students. Ulf Ekman, referring to the Catholic tradition, writes that the charismatic revival began through prayer of the Pope. As it is said, no comments ...

Also some Ulf Ekman's publications in the Swedish press raise questions, for example, very ambiguous article about infant baptism «Dopet – åtskiljande eller förenande?». Ulf Ekman says, "Recognition of the Baptism of children, whose parents are believers and worshipers, should not be seen as something unbiblical or invalid. ... To insist that Infant baptism, committed in the name of the Triune God and on the basis of our Christian faith, is invalid, this fact is not only problematic, but also hurts many Christians." We can have a long theological conversations, but Scripture clearly says that you must first believe and then be baptized (Mark 16:16). Baptism – is a deliberate step of faith that babies cannot do, no matter how great "believers and worshipers" are their parents.

To me, like to many other pastors, it is still unclear, what has affected the change of Ulf Ekman's views. However, I believe that the main problem is not even in that. Like any man, he has every right on it, saying about it honestly and openly. But to use his authority to slander and destroy my good name, knowing that so many evangelical ministers simply will not follow him to Catholicism, is at least disrespectful, not to mention the division that Ulf Ekman made in our church and association of churches.

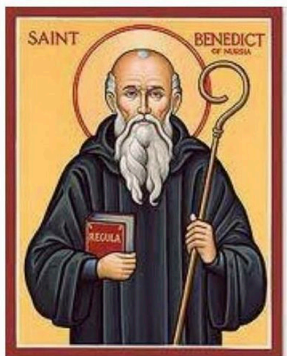
Also, I consider the explanation and justification of Ulf Ekman's acts not by himself, but by Christian Okerhielm and his other assistants, incorrect. I think that only he himself is responsible for the change of his views, and it would be correct of him to state this openly and personally.

Taking into account the recent publication that the "Word of Life" is not going to move to Catholicism, I understand that for many evangelicals it is hard to believe now how easy it is to succumb to human influence and change one's views. But I want to say that I myself, visiting pastors' travels to the Vatican and trusting authority of Ulf Ekman, was very close to it. Following the example of the "senior" Brothers, we have already begun to gradually introduce in our ministry the Eucharist of the Catholic sample, add some trappings, talk about the Virgin Mary more than usual, and only God knows what it could lead after just a few years, if not God's mercy to us.

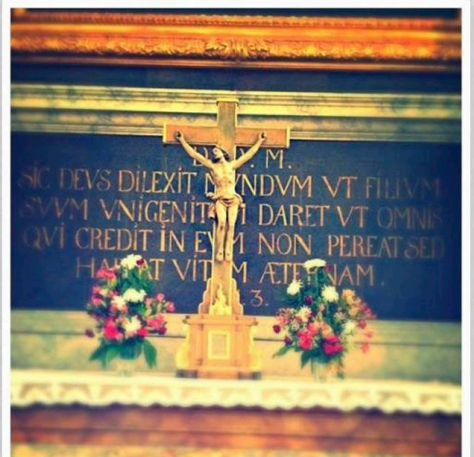


Anders Gerdmar

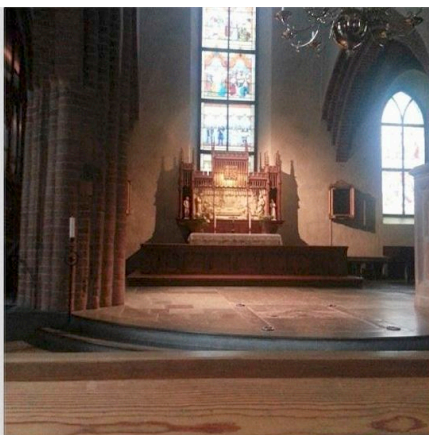
Benedict, one of the most influential saints. His followers "evangelized" Sweden, Ansgar & Cistercians.



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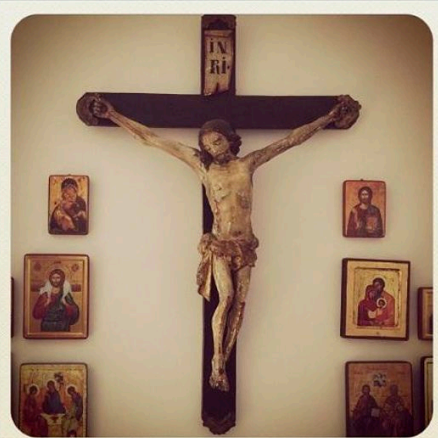


evgeny161278, teresia79, 3shornqvist and 47 others like this.

cgseverin In the center of Uppsala

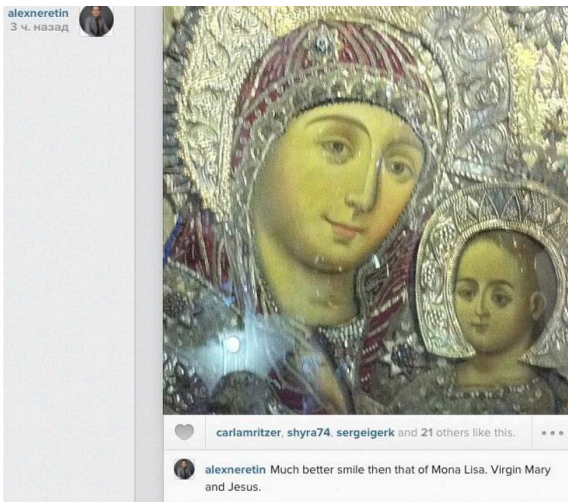
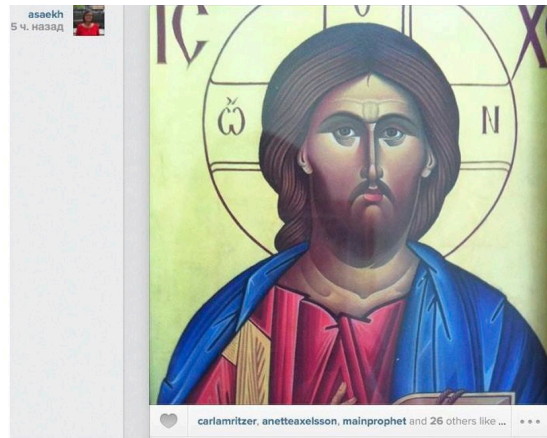
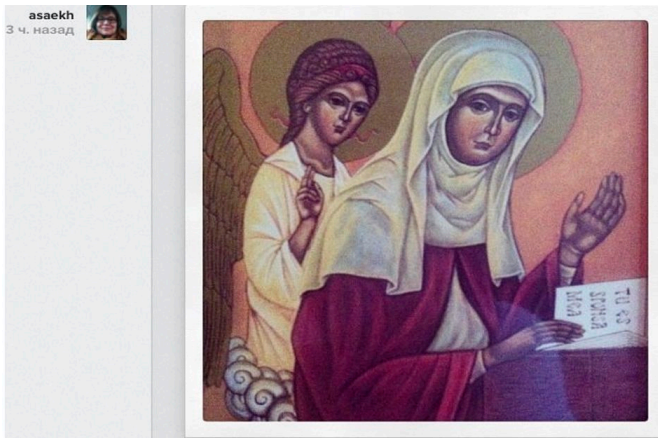
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Örsunda gård



Нравится richardlouis, lenaengelmark, amandasteens и...

marialq "Jesus för världen givit sitt liv"...



Contend for the faith of the gospel

*“Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you **contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints**” Jude 1:3 .*

*” Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,**striving together as one for the faith of the gospel** ” Phill.1:27*

“ But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?” Gal.4:9

I think many evangelical Christians left a godless world and formal Christianity not to become Catholics some years later. We were getting rid of the icons, talismans, amulets and other objects having more relation to paganism than to Christianity, according to the Word of God, not in order to return to them again. We were moved by only one thing: the desire to be personally acquainted with the living God, to follow the Risen Christ and keep evangelical faith. This desire drives us now!

Despite all the pain and humiliation through which I, my family and the ministers had and have to go because of spread slander and lies coming from Ulf Ekman and his assistants, I am deeply grateful to God for the grace that He has given to me, my family, our church and association of churches, returning us to a clean, sensible teaching of the Gospel. Recently, we have experienced so much of God's love, grace and comfort as we haven't experienced in recent years! Gradually the church is healing and restoring, and I believe that the best time will come soon! God gave a good word for our church and for Ukraine, that "Ukraine will be the bread and spiritual granary of the world"! I believe in a good change!

I sincerely urge all Christians to peace, mutual forgiveness, respect and friendship, to fellowship and sharing God's ministry. Let's not try to change each other or to judge untimely, but instead of it let's appreciate each other, help and support, believe and pray for unity Jesus Christ was talking about!

May God bless you!

With brotherly love in Christ,

Leonid Padun,

Pastor of the "Word of Life" in Donetsk,

Senior Bishop of the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church